



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS

As you know, the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs protect some of the most vulnerable members of our society. A successful disability program must evolve and support making the right decision as early in the process as possible. To help them do that, they must modernize the rules and standards they use to evaluate how they determine disability benefits.

Social Security is moving forward with a rule change that has been in the works for a number of years and serves to update a more than 40-year-old policy that made the inability to communicate in English a factor in awarding disability benefits. The new rule is effective April 27, 2020.

They are required to consider education to determine if a medical condition prevents work. In 2015, their Inspector General recommended they evaluate the appropriateness of this policy. Research now shows the inability to communicate in English is no longer a good measure of a person's education level or the ability to engage in work. The new rule also supports the Administration's longstanding focus of recognizing that individuals with disabilities can remain in the workforce.

To make the right disability decisions, their disability rules must reflect current medicine and the evolution of work. They need to update our rules to keep up with society's changes.

They believe they owe it to the American public to ensure that their disability programs continue to reflect the realities of the modern workplace. Questions regarding this issue can be directed to: OEA.Net.Post@ssa.gov.

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SFVAHC CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The VA Caregiver Support Program is expanding! The Caregiver Support Program is comprised of two programs: the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS), and the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

The PCAFC is currently available to eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001, and their caregivers. Under MISSION Act 2018, PCAFC will eventually become available to caregivers of eligible veterans of all eras. The expansion is expected to begin in Summer 2020.

PCAFC offers a monthly stipend, counseling, mental health services, enhanced respite services, health care through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of VA (CHAMPVA), if applicable, and certain beneficiary travel benefits.

The Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) is available to caregivers of eligible veterans of any era. Services offered through the PGCSS include training, education, respite services, telephone support, peer-support mentoring, self-care courses and more.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about either of these programs, please contact Nic Brokenleg, CSW-PIP EXT. 5018 or Becca Bixler, LCSW EXT. 7720, Caregiver Support Coordinators @ 605.336.3230. You may also find more information on the Caregiver Support website:

www.caregiver.va.gov.



VETERANS LEGAL CLINICS

The University of South Dakota School of Law Veterans' Legal Education Group (VLEG) will host two free veterans' legal clinics in March:

Friday, March 6—Sioux Falls DAV (1519 W. 51st St)

Saturday, March 7—Brookings VFW (520 Main Ave)

Both events will run from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (CT).

"The Veterans' Legal Education Group is dedicated to providing pro bono services to veterans, service members and their families by hosting free legal clinics each semester," said Levi Mitchell, a second-year law student and president of VLEG. "We organize these clinics by partnering with the State Bar of South Dakota and its committees such as the Young Lawyers Section and the Veterans Committee, the Department of Veterans Affairs and various local veterans groups. We are thankful for their support."

The Veterans' Legal Education Group's mission is to provide free legal assistance to South Dakota veterans and their families. About 20 students will partner with 10 volunteer attorneys to host the events. The group expects to assist over 40 veterans this March.

SD TECHNICAL SCHOOLS RENAMED TO TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Governor Kristi Noem signed legislation this week to change the names of South Dakota's four postsecondary technical institutes to better align the schools with other institutes around the nation. HB 1083 re-names technical institutes to technical colleges.

HB 1083's prime sponsors are Representative Hugh Bartels and Senator Jim White. The legislation received broad support throughout the legislative process and was supported by the South Dakota Board of Technical Education, South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and others.

The name change goes into effect on July 1 for technical schools in Watertown, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City.



Save the Dates



Center for Women Veterans announces the 2020 National Summit on Women Veterans Issues October 26-30, 2020

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs invites you to join senior leaders from VA – along with partners from the federal, VSO/nonprofits, corporate, and research communities – to identify challenges and opportunities facing women Veterans and innovative solutions and best practices in serving them.

More Information Coming Soon!

SD AMERICAN LEGION MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

This past weekend American Legion members met in Oacoma for their annual midwinter conference. Reports and updates were presented, as well as training provided.

In addition, the American Legion family managed to do some amazingly good deeds as well:

- 48 lives saved through blood drive donations
- 88 children will receive winter hats and gloves
- Nearly \$2,000 was donated to American Legion fundraising programs.

The conference was hosted by Chamberlain Post #3.



SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock attended the conference and updated members on the state veterans cemetery, the SDDVA/Avera “we honor veterans” partnership, and the fallen heroes bridge naming project. Secretary Whitlock appreciated the opportunity to visit with National American Legion Commander Bill Oxford.

This conference provides a great opportunity to reconnect with fellow veterans, renew old friendships, make new friendships and visit with veterans about challenges impacting them. Congrats to State Adjutant Travis Flisrand, State Service Officer Courtney VanZanten, State Commander Fred Nelson and his officers, Auxiliary State President Teresa Huntimer and her leadership team, and Post 3.

The American Legion State convention will be held June 18-21 in Huron.

TIMANUS WINS SD AMERICAN LEGION'S ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

Samantha Timanus of Gregory emerged victorious as the top orator in the final round of competition of the South Dakota American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program "A Constitutional Speech Contest" in Oacoma this past weekend.

Samantha is the daughter of Karen and Anthony Timanus of Gregory.

Contestants were required to deliver a prepared oration of eight to ten minutes on the U. S. Constitution. In addition, a constitutional topic was assigned to the contestants and a three to five minutes extemporaneous oration was required on that topic. They were allowed five minutes of preparation time.

Each of the five contestants in the finals had previously won competitions at the local and district levels of competition.

Those eligible to compete at the finals this past weekend consisted of Timanus, a junior at Gregory High School; Fiala Herceg, a sophomore at Aberdeen Central High School; Dorian Sikkink, a sophomore at Castlewood High School; Elias Grimsley, a sophomore at Spearfish High School; and Jayden Clark, a senior at Garretson High School. Second place

Timanus was awarded a championship trophy, a \$1,000 scholarship, and a plaque to be displayed in her high school's trophy case as the first-place winner of the state contest. She now has the opportunity to represent the South Dakota American Legion in the national contest which will be held April 17-19 in Indianapolis. Timanus will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship for participating in the first round of competition at national and an additional \$2,000 if she advances to the second round of national competition but does not make it into the final round. Scholarship awards possible in the national level competition are \$20,000 for first place, \$17,000 for second place, and \$15,000 for third place.

Since 1938, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program has encouraged the nation's high school students to study the U.S. Constitution and to hone their public speaking skills.



Pictured left to right: Department Commander Fred Nelson, 2020 Department Oratory Champion Samantha Timanus of Gregory, 2nd place - Fiala Herceg of Aberdeen, 3rd place - Dorian Sikkink of Castlewood, Jayden Clark of Garretson, Elias Grimsley of Spearfish, and South Dakota Americanism Chairman, Doug Harris.

SDDVA ANNUAL REPORT

The SDDVA CY 2019 annual report has been completed and can be found on our website at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Other%20Publications.aspx>. This report highlights our accomplishments and successes this past year.

As the voice for South Dakota's veterans, we know they and their families deserve the very best care and services that a grateful nation can provide them. We are fortunate to have a strong, dedicated network of partners working with us to improve the lives of our veterans and their families.



PURPLE UP

It's time to mark your calendars for "Month of the Military Child" in April. This is a time for us to celebrate and recognize our military youth for all that they do. There are over 6,400 military youth in South Dakota and over 3,800 of these youth are affiliated with the Army and Air National Guard. Please take the time to thank your children for their service.

Friday, April 17, is **PURPLE UP** for Military Kids in South Dakota. The **PURPLE UP** concept is a combined effort with the National Guard Child and Youth program and communities nationwide to encourage everyone to wear **purple** as a visible way to show support and thanks to our military children for their strength and sacrifices.

Please share the **PURPLE UP** message with others in your community—spread the word to your schools, churches, and the city offices. Please get them involved! Help us salute to all military children on April 17th by wearing **purple**.



PURPLE UP! for Military Kids

Let's turn South Dakota Purple on April 17th 2020

Show your support of your military kid by wearing purple on April 17th.
Please visit <https://2020purpleup.itemorder.com> to order your 2020 Purple Up Shirt.
There are two shirt style options available on the website.

All proceeds go towards supporting events for South Dakota's Military Kids. Thank you for supporting your Military Youth!
For an additional \$5.00, shirts can be shipped straight to your door, or we can deliver the shirts to your local armory for pick up at no additional cost.



Questions: Please contact Child & Youth Program Coordinator, Candice Bloom at 605.882.9376 or Candice.l.bloom.ctr@mail.mil

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 1-5—National VFW Legislative Conference—Washington, DC
Mar 4—VABHHCS Art Show—Fort Meade VA Campus—Building 145 Classroom 109—1:00 pm (MT)
Mar 6—Drop-In Legal Service for Veterans—DAV Sioux Falls Chapter—1519 W. 51st Street—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
Mar 11—VABHHCS Art Show—Hot Springs VA Campus—Building 1 Rotunda—1:00 pm (MT)
Mar 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Mar 24—Culvers Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight
Mar 25—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown
Mar 30—SWO Vietnam Veterans Celebration—Dakota Magic Casino—11:30 am—1:30 pm (CT)
Apr 10-13 State Offices closed
Apr 17—Purple Up day in South Dakota
Apr 21—KELOLAND Career Expo—Rushmore Mall—Rapid City—11:00 am—4:00 pm (MT)
Apr 26—Midwest Honor Flight Pancake Feed Fundraiser—Forster Community Center—Rock Rapids, IA—10:00 (CT)
May 8—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)
May 12—8th Annual WWII Veterans Luncheon—TREA Building—Rapid City—11:00 am (MT)
May 15-17—DAV State Convention—Brookings
May 21-22—PVA Annual Fishing Tournament—Chamberlain
May 25—MJFSVH Memorial Day Car Show—MJFSVH Campus—Hot Springs—11:30 am—3:00 pm (MT)
May 25—State Offices closed for Memorial Day
May 30—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7
June 3-7—VFW State Convention—Aberdeen
Jun 18-21—American Legion State Convention—Huron
Jul 10—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Bldg. 145—Room 108—Fort Meade VAMC—10:00 am (MT)
Aug 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota Conference Center—Pierre
Sep 3—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair
Sep 3-7—SD State Fair
Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8 (Tentative)
Sep 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Oct 11—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 (Tentative)
Oct 26-30—National Summit on Women Veterans Issues (more information coming)
Nov 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)

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